

Procedures for hospital complaints

Everyone talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it. This axiom seems to hold true for many other things. Recently there have been a number of articles in the papers surrounding the care offered at the Georgetown hospital. Likewise, I have received a number of calls on this subject.



By PAT WOODE
Herald Columnist

I have spoken with Mr. Morris, Hospital Administrator, regarding some of the concerns that have been brought to my attention. He informed me that they are interested in hearing about patient's concerns and have an established procedure for this. Each patient admitted to the hospital is given the opportunity to complete a "complaint form" in which they can express their opinions, he informed us.

It is in your best interest to fill in these forms as accurately as possible as these are a monitor of hospital performance. Should you wish to pursue your concern upon receiving a reply from the hospital, this accuracy and a duplicate copy of your "complaint" will enable you to do so.

The next step involves a letter to the chairman of the hospital board with a copy to the Regional Health Council. Keep a copy for yourself.

Should your complaint focus on the performance of a doctor as op-

posed to the hospital or hospital procedures, you should contact The College of Physicians and Surgeons if the reply to your complaint from the hospital not to your satisfaction.

Beyond these steps and still within the system is a letter to provincial minister of health with a copy sent to Tony Ruprecht (Minister without portfolio for the Physically Disabled) if you are handicapped.

Sometimes people feel pressured when asked to fill out forms immediately. It is best under these circumstances to take your complaint form home and complete it at your leisure, when you turn it in, make a note to whom you gave it and when.

Some problems are of such magnitude that it is wise to consult a lawyer before submitting anything including the original complaint form. If you are uncertain and do not have a family lawyer, the legal clinic may be able to advise you on this matter.

One of the major purposes of complainting is to promote necessary changes within the hospital to improve the service. Constructive suggestions to accomplish this end is often better received than a straight complaint.

As consumers it is up to us to let the providers know when the services rendered are not satisfactory. The suggestions outlined above are the procedures provided within the system.

Now for some good news. The Georgetown doctors have agreed to meet patients at the hospital or in their own homes. In order to do so however, the patient must be considered to have a severe disability which prevents them from climbing the stairs at their offices. The decision regarding patient qualifications will rest with the doctor.

Who's that solitary driver talking to?

By DAVID EMSLIE
Herald Special

If the gentleman in the car next to you looks like he's talking to himself, it may be the Regional Chairman, Peter Pomeroy, talking on his new cellular telephone.

The region's administration and finance committee has recommended that the regional chairman's new vehicle be outfitted with a cellular phone as a pilot project.

Oakville Coun. Fred Oliver first raised the idea for the phones with the planning and public works department, when he said there is a need for these phones for several regional staff.

The investigation that followed Coun. Oliver's suggestion showed that although the public works department is fully equipped with an extensive two-way radio system, it is not able to contact emergency ser-

vices directly. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Dennis Perlin stressed they do not want to replace the current radio system, but improve upon it. "If trouble arises, the foreman could call directly to the emergency response teams, or to officials responsible for chemical spill clean-ups," he said.

In this way they could cut out the middle man, which is the base for the two-way radios, and get a faster response, Mr. Perlin explained.

The foreman on the site could also give direct instructions to the emergency team, and thus ensure the accuracy of the message, a report from Mr. Perlin says.

The main reason given for the regional chairman needing a cellular phone is he is on the road a great deal, and could use his driving time effectively if he had a phone

Mr. Perlin's report said the regional chairman could also be reached for emergencies while in his car if it were equipped with a cellular phone, and as he drives regional staff to various meetings, they could also be reached in case of emergency.

The study showed the business development, social services and the health departments and the CAO's office could also benefit from having the same phone system.

The pilot project, if approved, will run for two to four months, and will test the effectiveness of the equipment, the safety of talking on a phone while driving, and whether productivity is improved through use of the phone.

Although the recommendation was passed with little opposition at the administration and finance com-

mittee meeting last week, Burlington Coun. Rob Forbes suggested leaving the project until next year's budget.

"I see it as being a benefit," he said, "but it's not pressing, so why not wait?"

Oakville Mayor Bill Perras also had some concerns, the first of which was cost. The phones cost approximately \$1,200 to \$1,500 a year to lease, or to lease to buy.

Secondly, he recommended phones that were not hand held, for safety's sake.

"I see people driving holding their phone, and it doesn't look very safe," he said. The mayor was also concerned that if someone received disturbing news while driving, it could cause an accident.

Council will make its decision on the pilot project today (Wednesday).

Halton looking into incinerating wastes with other regions

By MAGGIE HANNAM
Herald Special

In the process of solving her own waste disposal problems Halton may be willing to help other municipalities with similar problems.

At a public meeting last week at which the public was noticeably absent, members of the regional solid waste management committee passed a resolution authorizing staff to approach other municipalities about a joint effort from waste project.

The meeting was called to allow the public to hear and question conclusions of a citizens solid waste management committee which has been studying energy from waste for over a year.

The council and citizen committee agreed that public involvement would remain scanty until a site is

chosen for an EFW plant. Once that happens the residents will make their opinions known loudly and plainly.

Council acceptance of the citizens' committee recommendations is the first step. Regional chief administrative officer Dennis Perlin said actually selecting a site for the plant is the second step.

Once the site is known it will enable prospective builders to determine concrete proposals including costs. Then council will have a firm deal to take to other municipalities which might be willing to use Halton's plant.

Mr. Perlin said council must make it plain it is willing to take other municipalities' garbage and also to allow that waste to be transported to Halton's plant.

Should Wellington County, for instance, want to use a Halton plant, he felt it would be a very workable option. A plant located in the Milton industrial park at Highways 401 and 25 would be only 20 miles from Guelph Transportation and tipping fees in such an arrangement might be more favorable for Wellington than trying to build its own plant at the University of Guelph, which has been proposed.

Equally Mr. Perlin said, he thought council would have no opposition to reversing the procedure and exporting its waste to an EFW plant in a neighboring municipality if such an offer were made since Halton is already exporting its waste to New York.

—Courtesy Guelph Mercury

Halton still dumps

The Ministry of the Environment has issued another certificate allowing Halton to continue using the temporary loading facility at its Burlington dump.

Dated April 1, the new certificate allows Halton to continue loading up garbage for export to an incineration plant in Niagara Falls, New York until the date of closure of the landfill site.

The region is to take all reasonable precautions to prevent wind blown litter from leaving the facility. As well, when wind speeds are more than 37 kilometres per hour, garbage isn't to be accepted, stored or transferred.

19th century photos

There's an exhibit of photos by 19th century photographer Edward Curtis up 'til May 4 at the Crawford Lake Conservation Centre. His work shows the traditional North American Indian way of life, portraits, landscapes and the dress of the times. For more information, call 478-4131 weekdays and 654-0231 weekends.

Design a t-shirt

Boys and girls ages eight to 12 are invited to a "Design Your Own T-Shirt" professional development day program at the Georgetown and Acton Public Libraries on May 2, at 2 p.m. There are still a few spaces available, so register now by calling 877-2901 (Georgetown) or 453-0301 (Acton).

The door's open and everyone's welcome

Some years ago, a young man wandered into a drop-in centre, looking for a change in the direction of his life, looking for somewhere to turn.

The "Doorway", as this centre was called, offered some things that this young man desperately needed. It was a place to get away from things, a place to meet new people, a place to drink a cup of coffee and learn a

couple of guitar chords. Most of all, it was a place to learn, grow and work out problems with others and a place to lose the lonely, empty feelings that teenage life seems to provoke. The wonderful experience this man had inspired him, in later years, to organize a drop-in centre with the same kind of "open-door" arrangement.

Bob Tadmán organized such a place - where everybody is welcome - and so it is appropriately named The Open Door. So far, The Open Door has been successful, and the results are even better than Mr. Tadmán had hoped for.

The Open Door is located at St. George's Anglican Church, beside Georgetown District High School. Therefore, many of the kids drop-in during the day, and after school. Not just one group of kids frequent it, either.

An interesting part of Open Door is that a mixture of people can be found there. This interaction with contrasting groups of people has proven beneficial.

Every two weeks, council meetings are attended by council members: kids who have been chosen amongst themselves, representing each group. The accomplishments of this council have been phenomenal, in the sense that they can work on things together, despite their differences, and even discuss their different attitudes.

The council has banned smoking at the drop-in centre this past winter, and has also decided to designate people to welcome newcomers at the Open Door.

Based on the basic principle of love, the Open Door has provided these kids with a place of their own, where the decisions are theirs, and their freedom to do as they please is provided.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Monique is a grade 12 Georgetown District High School student working at The Herald. She is at the newspaper half-days for four months completing requirements for a co-op program.



By MONIQUE TOBIN



Artists in league

Paintings, sculptures, prints and some non-art items will be auctioned off by the Georgetown YMCA May 2. Local artists like (left) painter Carole Black and potter Grace McKnight have their works for sale at the auction. The auction begins at 8 p.m. at Holy Cross auditorium in Georgetown. Doors open at 7 p.m. for viewing. (Herald photo)

Baha's booklet

Mayor Russ Miller has one, so does the head librarian for Georgetown and Acton, Betsy Cornwell. Even local news editors received one.

The Baha'is of Halton Hills are distributing a book to a variety of opinion makers in town. The book is called "To the Peoples of the World Peace".

Isabell Weaver and Shahab Vafae are the two members distributing the books. If you would like more information call 877-1649.

Children in school

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benefit from these experiences. At present, many of them are limited to those children whose parents can afford to pay for them.

This is a very serious problem in the public school system. It is up to us to ask questions, and be prepared to pay so every child has equal opportunities, or put a stop to some of the activities which are not necessarily a part of our children's formal education.

Just ask yourselves this one question: WHY ARE OUR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL?

J. Robertson

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